

Dateline DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

A Message from the Secretary

It is hard to believe it has been nearly 40 years. Or over one year.

For most of us who are old enough to remember, November 22, 1963 was the first experience we had with 'time standing still.' Where we were and what we were doing when President Kennedy was assassinated is still firmly entrenched in our minds, an everlasting memory of one of the most dramatic turning points in our nation's recent history.

Although some of us may have experienced some other moments where time stood still since then, probably none can compare with September 11, 2001. The events on that September morning are placed right next to that November afternoon in 1963. And for those who are too young to remember 1963, September 11, 2001 is as permanent a memory in the minds of today's youth as November 22, 1963 is for us.

Last year at this time I wrote, that as we recover from the shock created by the tragic events of 9-11, it is extremely important for us to return to doing what we do best — protecting the health of the people we serve.

And I believe we have done just that.

We responded in a yeoman-like effort to the anthrax attacks last fall. Many people worked endless hours to make sure all the lab tests were completed, that all the epidemiological leads were chased down and conclusions were drawn.

Also in the fall, we received two federal grants to support crisis mental health services and to supplement existing mental health and substance abuse systems in areas affected by the terrorist attacks.

In spring we applied for — and in June received — \$16.8 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enhance our readiness. These dollars will help us upgrade our laboratories, hire additional epidemiological and other public health staff, upgrade and expand our communications systems, develop a stronger and more cohesive network between State agencies, and increase partnerships between the public and private sectors.

I am extremely proud of the work we have done during these last 12 months. While we were busy dealing with threats, applying for grants and upgrading our capabilities, we continued to respond to the every-day needs that fall upon the shoulders of public health workers.

And most of this has been done while under a hiring freeze.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. And keep up the good work!



Building Committee to Address Concerns

As a result of issues raised about the air quality in the O'Connor Building, a committee has been formed to facilitate input and receive concerns from employees working in the building. In addition to addressing the air quality concerns, the committee will conduct a survey of various building issues and work to recommend remedial action.

Deputy Secretary for Operations, Jon Seeman, is the chairperson of the committee. Other members include representatives from DHMH, employee unions and the Department of General Services (DGS) — see list at end of story.

During its first meeting in August, the group discussed the actions taken as a result of the initial air quality concerns that were raised in the spring.

The State Medical Director reported that 23 employees

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Building

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had been referred for examination. All were released to return to work after being examined.

The DGS representative said several steps have occurred to improve the building's environment and noted that the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is functioning more efficiently since repairs were made.

All variable fire dampers and air volume boxes have been checked and adjusted as necessary. Damp or soiled fiberglass insulation on the ducts has been removed. Some ducts remain to be cleaned or replaced as appropriate after the cooling season ends.

In addition, DGS has replaced 1,540 ceiling tiles that were stained or soiled and cleaned all of the office-side carpets.

Other issues identified for follow-up include the quality of the drinking fountain water, the cleanliness of the lavatories, and the status of the cancer cluster study conducted in the 1990's. A work-group will look into the drinking water and housekeeping concerns.

Any employee who has a concern about the O'Connor Building's environment is encouraged to contact a committee representative. They are:

DHMH representatives

Service Level

Charlotte Krueger,
Office of Operations and Eligibility
410-767-5347;
e-mail: KruegerC@dhmh.state.md.us

Lobby Level

Sheila DeLaquil,
Laboratories Administration
410-767-5426;

e-mail: DelaquilS@dhmh.state.md.us

Second Floor

Lola Matz, Office of Health
Services
410-767-1722;
e-mail: MatzL@dhmh.state.md.us

Third Floor

Laura Berg,
Family Health Administration
410-767-8827;
e-mail: LBerg@dhmh.state.md.us

Fourth Floor

Novella Jones, Developmental
Disabilities Administration
410-767-5614;
e-mail: JonesN@dhmh.state.md.us

Fifth Floor

Charles Fleming,
Office of the Secretary
410-767-5783;
e-mail: FlemingC@dhmh.state.md.us

Union representatives

Dave Harding, AFSCME (DHMH)
410-767-4019;
e-mail: DHarding@dhmh.state.md.us

Jeff Bigelow,
AFSCME administrative offices
410-547-1515

Mike Franch, MFHNP (DHMH)
410-767-1442;
e-mail: FranchM@dhmh.state.md.us

MPEC - pending response

DGS representative

Michele Rozner
410-260-2907

Specific problems or complaints may be addressed to Bob Beasman, Director of the DHMH General Services Administration, at 410-767-5822 or by e-mail at beasmanr@dhmh.state.md.us.

Let's Walk!

Does the word 'exercise' make you cringe? Is finding time to exercise during your busy work day difficult? Is it hard for you to find a place to exercise? If you answered YES to any of these questions, pick up the phone and call Judy Wilson.

As the coordinator of the Maryland Advisory Council on Physical Fitness, Judy strives to help people improve their health through exercise — in ways that work with busy lifestyles. "My goal is to get people interested in taking care of themselves," she said.

With that aim in mind, Judy decided to promote an easy fitness activity that anyone can take part in, with no expensive memberships or clunky machines to purchase. The fliers she posted around DHMH in June said, "Let's Walk!" and encouraged readers to contact her for more details. By the end of July, about 50 people had expressed interest in a walking program.

August 6 marked the first official meeting of the Walking Club. "We walk every Tuesday and Thursday," Judy said. "We meet at 11:55 a.m. near the security desk in the lower lobby of the O'Connor Building. We start with a few minutes of stretching and walk for half an hour. Then we finish with a brief cool-down period." Before meeting, many walkers change into athletic shoes and sport the club's snazzy new tee shirts featuring their very own running-shoe logo.

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Let's Walk!

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To keep the scenery interesting, the walkers vary their route each day, exploring many streets and neighborhoods surrounding the State Office Complex. "If it's uncomfortably hot outside," Judy said, "we'll walk around the gymnasium of the Armory building instead."

So far, Judy is pleased with the enthusiastic response and participation in the walking club. In fact, in mid-September, she encouraged club members to take part in Club Maryland's "Walkabout" a six-week, individually-paced walking program designed for those of all fitness levels. Judy is also pursuing a grant to fund an aerobics class, which she hopes to begin teaching when "Walkabout" wraps up at the end of October. "People are more likely to stay interested in a fitness program if they don't get bored from always doing the same activity," Judy said.

She would like to take the walking club a step further by meeting individually with each of the participants. "I would love to work with each person to help them set up personal fitness and nutrition goals," she explained.

"Many people don't realize how small lifestyle changes — like taking stairs instead of the elevator — can improve their overall health and fitness levels. I'd like to help them find time and motivation to make those kinds of changes."

If you are interested in joining the walking club or would like



to know more about it, give Judy a call at 410-767-5046.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Tara Snyder, Community Health Educator in the Center of Health Promotion, Education and Tobacco Prevention, for writing this article.

Farmer's Market Just For You

Many of us know we need better eating habits. We also know that eating more fruits and vegetables would be a big step in the right direction. With that in mind, the DHMH Division of Cardiovascular Health & Nutrition wants to help you get started.

The Division, acting on its idea to set up a Farmer's Market at the state office complex, has collaborated with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Department of General Services, to establish a weekly market.

Held every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., you can buy fresh Maryland produce at the market located in front of the 300 W. Preston Street building. The market will be open until the end of November.

The **Maryland 5 A Day** program, operated by the Division of Cardiovascular Health & Nutrition, works to expand the public's knowledge about the

importance of eating 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily and to improve accessibility to vegetables and fruits in many settings.

When canned, frozen, dried or fresh produce is readily available, consumers buy and eat more fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories, fat, sodium and are good sources of fiber, folate, potassium, vitamin A and vitamin C.

Since fresh fruits and vegetables are still in season, give up the cans and take advantage of the opportunity to buy fresh.

Stop by the market on Wednesdays and pick up vegetables for your child's lunch box and after school snacks. Fill a basket with fruit and leave it on your desk to tempt you away from calorie-laden vending machine items during the workday. Use the market to supply delicious, healthy vegetable sticks and fruit for a department meeting.

Remember the theme for National 5 A Day Week: **"Eating 5 to 9 and Feeling Fine — Fruits and Vegetables Anytime,"** and shop the new state office farmer's market.

Editor's Note: Thanks to the staff in the Family Health Administration's Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition for writing this article.



Community-Based Rehabilitative Treatment Offers Higher Quality of Service

The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program recently amended its rehabilitative services to ensure that children with disabilities have early access to quality community resources. Therapeutic Behavioral Service is a one-on-one intervention designed to prevent children from needing a more intensive level of care.

Additionally, the new changes created a single point of entry and expanded the qualifications for providers to render care.

The program is operated in collaboration with the Mental Hygiene and Developmental Disabilities Administrations with support from Maryland Health Partners.

"What makes this program different is that the behavioral interventions will be rendered primarily in the home or the school setting," said Alisa Davis, a nurse consultant within the Division of Children's Services. The program targets Medical Assistance recipients up to the age of 21 who suffer from a mental illness or have a developmental disability.

"The services are rendered according to a behavior plan which is

geared toward restoring adaptive behaviors," Alisa said. "Our goal is to return the children to their typical behavioral patterns."

Therapeutic behavioral services are available under the Medical Assistance fee-for-service program for all children including those enrolled in a managed care organization and children covered by the Maryland Children's Health Program. It is funded with a matching grant through the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

For additional information, call Ms. Davis at 410-767-1485.



Rose Ann Meinecke at a training for providers.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday and Wednesday, October 1 - 2 — **Blood Drive.** O'Connor Building lobby, 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Call Stacey Simmons at 410-767-6403 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, October 5 — **Race for the Cure**, a 5K run/walk or a one-mile fun walk sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Ravens Stadium in Baltimore. Registration begins at 6:00 a.m.; one-mile fun walk begins at 8:00 a.m.; the 5K run/walk starts at 8:45 a.m.

Thursday, October 10 — **Conference: Fourteenth Annual Suicide Prevention Conference, One Year Later: Surviving Trauma, Preventing Suicide**, Martin's West, 8:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. Contact Henry Westray, Jr. at 410-402-8494 for more information.

Friday, October 11 — **Maryland's First Town Meeting on Suicide**, Martin's West, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Contact Henry Westray, Jr. at 410-402-8494 for more information.

Tuesday, October 29 — **Workshop: A Coping Skills Approach for Treating Chronic Illness, Loss and Death**; University of Maryland School of Nursing Baltimore; 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. \$120, approved for Category I and Category A continuing education credits. Phone 410-706-1839 for more information or visit the school's Web site at www.ssw.umaryland.edu for a full workshop description.



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Parris N. Glendening
Governor
Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
Lieutenant Governor
Georges C. Benjamin, M.D.
Secretary, DHMH
Karen Black
Director of Public Relations
John Hammond
Editor

DHMH Office of Public Relations
201 West Preston Street, Room 506
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Phone: 410-767-6490
FAX: 410-333-7525
TTY: 1-800-735-2258

To contribute to **Dateline DHMH** or for further information, contact John Hammond, Office of Public Relations, 410-767-6490, hammondj@dhmh.state.md.us. Please visit our Web site at www.dhmh.state.md.us.